

**A**

**HOW TO PREPARE BOOKLET**

**FOR THE**

**DEPARTMENTAL PROCUREMENT OFFICER I**

**10948**

**WRITTEN EXAMINATION**

State of Alabama  
Personnel Department  
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## **NOTE**

IF YOUR APPLICATION MEETS THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS  
FOR DEPARTMENTAL PROCUREMENT OFFICER I (10948)  
YOU WILL BE SCHEDULED TO TAKE THE EXAMINATION.

YOU WILL RECEIVE A TEST CARD APPROXIMATELY  
TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE TEST.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Applicants meeting the minimum requirements for *Departmental Procurement Officer I (10948)* will be scheduled to sit for the written examination. To be placed on the register, you must complete an examination. Your performance on the examination will make up 100% of your final score.

This booklet has been designed to help you prepare for the *Departmental Procurement Officer I (10948)* examination. It contains a description of the exam, study suggestions, and sample test questions. Read this booklet carefully so that you will know what is expected of you at the test site and during the exam.

## **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS**

If you would like to request special testing accommodation or have any questions concerning the test site or testing conditions, please contact the State Personnel Department at (334)242-3389.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE EXAM**

The examination for this classification is a multiple-choice exam. A multiple-choice exam is designed to measure specific knowledges and abilities. As an applicant for *Departmental Procurement Officer I*, you are expected to have some of the knowledges and abilities necessary to carry out the duties of the job. The purpose of the exam is to measure those knowledges and abilities necessary for an applicant to possess **before** employment. The specific knowledges and abilities that will be measured on this exam include:

- ❖ The knowledge of basic accounting concepts as needed to ensure proper account codes and adhere with budget
- ❖ The knowledge of English and metric unit weights and measures such as pounds, grams, cubic yards, metric tons, ounces, pints, cases, gross, etc. as needed to order correct quantities
- ❖ The knowledge of filing systems including alphabetical, numerical, geographical, and chronological as needed to store, access, and maintain records
- ❖ The knowledge of purchasing and shipping terminology such as requisitions, contracts, purchase orders, net, gross, commodity, shipping point, etc. as needed to properly complete requisitions and effectively communicate with vendors and other agencies (i.e. Finance/Comptroller/State Purchasing)
- ❖ The knowledge of basic mathematics to include addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and percentages as needed to ensure correct quantities and pricing
- ❖ The ability to make decisions using independent judgment as needed to meet deadlines and time constraints
- ❖ The ability to quickly and accurately compare details as needed to ensure correct receipt and amount of products and services

- ❖ **The ability to prioritize as needed to accurately and timely complete purchasing tasks**
- ❖ **The ability to write to include standard grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling as needed to effectively communicate and compose correspondence**

The exam consists of **83** multiple choice questions and is divided into nine sections. Each section will measure one of the knowledges or abilities listed above. You will be presented with a test question and four possible responses to that question. You should then select the **BEST** possible response to the question.

**You will have 3 hours to complete the exam.**

## **WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU COME TO TAKE THE EXAM**

- Be well rested. Get a good night's sleep for several nights before the exam.
- Allow plenty of time to get to the exam location. Plan to get there approximately 15 minutes before the scheduled time to avoid feeling rushed and late.
- Come to the exam dressed comfortably.
- Read this booklet. You may want to practice using the example items.
- Do **not** bring this booklet or any other study materials to the exam location. You will not be permitted to bring them into the testing room.
- You must bring several sharpened #2 pencils with good erasers. It is also recommended that you bring at least one (1) highlighter pen.
- You must bring the NOTIFICATION CARD that you received from the State of Alabama Personnel Department. This card lists the examination title; location of exam; and date, day, and time of examination.
- You must also bring a form of PICTURE IDENTIFICATION to the exam location. This may be your driver's license, a military identification card, or passport. You will not be allowed into the testing location without your NOTIFICATION CARD and PICTURE IDENTIFICATION.
- You may bring a calculator to use for the Departmental Procurement Officer I examination. Small solar powered or battery operated calculators that perform basic functions such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, square roots, or percentages are allowed. Calculators that plug-in, utilize tape, have word processing, spelling, thesauruses, or other storage and retrieval capabilities (except basic memory functions) are not allowed. ***Calculators that are a feature on a cell phone are not permitted.*** Calculators are subject to inspection by exam monitors. Applicants may not borrow or share calculators at the exam site.

## **DURING THE EXAM**

When you report to the exam, a test monitor will check you in and provide specific instructions on where to sit for the exam. The test monitor will be in the testing room and will be available to assist you if you have any problems; however, the monitor **will not interpret exam questions for you.**

The general exam instructions that you will receive during the exam are included on the following pages.

## **HOW TO TAKE THE EXAM**

- Use your time efficiently. The exam is not a test of how quickly you can answer questions; however, you should pace yourself to ensure that you have enough time to complete it. In the section(s) of the test that require reading, try to keep a steady pace. Try to finish as much of the test as you can.
- As on most tests, you will find some of the exam items to be harder than others. Even if you do not know an answer, it will be to your advantage to guess since your score will be based on the number of correct answers. It is suggested that you first work through the test without spending too much time on any one item. After you have gone through the test once, go back to those items you may have skipped or of which you were unsure. Remember: it is to your advantage to answer every item.
- When you take the exam, you will be given an exam booklet and a separate answer sheet. The person giving the exam (the exam monitor) will explain how to complete the answer sheet and how to mark your answers. **The most important thing to remember is that you should always be sure the item number in the exam booklet is the same as the number you are marking on the answer sheet and that you mark only one answer per item.** Items with more than one answer will be counted as incorrect.

## **SCORING**

Your education and experience have already been reviewed to determine if you meet the minimum qualifications for this position. You will not receive additional credit for your education and experience. Your score on the multiple-choice exam will make up 100% of your final score.

When the written examination is graded, the scores will be grouped into bands. When you receive notification of how you did on the exam, you will not be given a numerical score (e.g., You will not receive a score of 95 out of 100.). Rather, you will be informed into which band your score fell.

Approximately four to six weeks after completing the exam, you will receive a Notice of Examination Results postcard in the mail. This postcard will identify your score, or Band placement, for the written exam. If you have not received your score within four to six weeks, you should call State Personnel Department.

In addition to your Band placement, you may also obtain your standing, or rank on the register, online at [www.personnel.alabama.gov](http://www.personnel.alabama.gov). From the home page, you should click on “Applicants” and then “Register Standings”, and follow the instructions. For security purposes, you must now create an online profile in order to access your standing.

The following page will provide you with information to help you understand the banding procedure.

## **WHAT IS BANDING?**

Banding is one way to reduce the impact of fluctuations in test scores that do not provide meaningful information about differences in the ability to do the job. One important purpose of testing is to identify the differences in test scores that reflect real differences among candidates. Banded scoring is a statistical procedure for grouping raw test scores that statistically are not meaningfully different from one another. In banded scoring, bands are set objectively and mathematically. They are not manipulated arbitrarily.

## **MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT BANDING**

There are many misconceptions about banding and the use of banded scores. Some of the most common misconceptions are listed below. Each misconception is followed by a clarification.

**1.) Misconception: Each band should have the same number of people.**

The people in a band are similar to each other in that statistically there is no meaningful difference in their scores. Sometimes Band 1 may be very large and at other times it may be small. We do not force bands to be a certain size. The size of the bands is based on the scores people make.

**2.) Misconception: Band numbers have no meaning. I don't have a score.**

Think of a band as a group of tied scores. Think of a band as a group of scores that statistically are not meaningfully different. In school, two students with average grades of 94.5 and 94.3 would both be grouped into a band called "A" because the teacher cannot be sure that .2 of a point is a real difference in achievement. Think of scores on achievement tests children take in school. The fine print on the tests always cautions you not to focus on the numerical score but rather on the comparative score which uses some grouping technique such as percentiles, stanines, standard deviations, grade levels, etc. These grouping techniques are considered forms of banding.

**3.) Misconception: Band numbers are the same as letter grades.**

Band 1 does not equate to an "A," Band 2 to a "B," etc. In school a predetermined numerical score (e.g., 92-100) equals an A. In banding, scores are banded only in relation to one another. Unlike grade school bands, the width of bands is not set in advance. You compete against your peers only. Your scores are set in relation to your peers only.

**4.) Misconception: A band score on one test has the same value as a band score on another test.**

Banded scores are test specific and cannot be compared to banded scores on other tests.

**5.) Misconception: People who have been on the job longest should be in the top bands.**

Time spent in a job may not be the same as skill in doing the job. The people with the strongest skills (or who did best on the exam) should be in the top bands. Some of these people will have been in the job longer than others. Years of service do not always equal proficiency.

**6.) Misconception: A standing in Band 4 or below automatically indicates failure or ineligibility for jobs.**

This statement is false. A band score of 4 or lower is not automatically equated with failure. The true test of your employment opportunities is whether or not you can be certified and considered for a job vacancy.

**7.) Misconception: Banding replaced the “Rule of 10.”**

Banding did not replace the “Rule of 10.” The “Rule of 10” determines the number of bands to be certified. In the past, tied scores referred to an actual numerical score (e.g., two candidates with a score of 98.98 were considered tied) while now all of the scores within a band are considered tied.

**8.) Misconception: People in a band do not differ.**

When several people are placed in the same band, it does not mean that those people do not differ. Instead, it means that their scores on the exam do not differ enough to be separate scores.

### **STUDY SUGGESTIONS**

In preparing for the exam, you may wish to employ some of the following strategies to help you study:

- ✓ Pretend that you are in a real testing situation and try not to talk to anyone else while you are answering the sample test items.
- ✓ Practice following instructions. Read sections of how-to books or instruction manuals you may have at home and practice taking notes or highlighting important aspects of the sections.
- ✓ Practice using a hand-held calculator to add, subtract, multiply, and divide.
- ✓ Study the Sample Test Items in this How to Prepare Booklet.

***Other strategies not listed above, that you have used in the past, may also be helpful in preparation for the exam.***



## **SAMPLE TEST ITEMS**

### **BASIC ACCOUNTING CONCEPTS**

1. The costs of goods or services that are used to operate a business are called \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. expenses
  - B. finances
  - C. assets
  - D. sales

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A sheet from the general journal of a local government agency is reproduced below. The question which follows is based on comparisons between the entries recorded on this sheet and the transactions as described. Read these explanations carefully to determine if errors exist in the journal entries.

#### **General Journal**

DESCRIPTION	DEBITS	CREDITS
Equipment	2,600	
Accounts Payable		2,000
Cash		600
(R. Bean, Inc., Invoice #103)		

2. In the above transaction the journal entry for "Accounts Payable" is \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. in the wrong column
  - B. for the wrong amount
  - C. for the wrong account
  - D. none of the above

### **ENGLISH & METRIC UNIT WEIGHT & MEASUREMENTS**

3. You need to order a yard of cable. You can order cable only in feet. The amount of cable that you need to order is \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. one foot
  - B. three feet
  - C. six feet
  - D. none of the above

4. You can order cleaner in the following quantities: one gallon, four liters, and 32 ounces. To order the largest quantity of cleaner, you should order \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. one gallon
- B. four liters
- C. 32 ounces
- D. none of the above

### **FILING SYSTEMS**

5. Arrange the following items in numerical order for filing.

- 1. 6504
- 2. 6919
- 3. 6639
- 4. 6361

- A. 2, 3, 4, 1
- B. 1, 2, 3, 4
- C. 4, 1, 3, 2
- D. 3, 2, 1, 4

6. Arrange the following names in alphabetical order.

- 1. Rand & Brothers, Inc.
- 2. Cromer Incorporated
- 3. Radal, Sons, & Company
- 4. Klinger Paint an Plastic

- A. 2, 4, 3, 1
- B. 2, 4, 1, 3
- C. 4, 1, 3, 2
- D. 4, 3, 2, 1

### **PURCHASING & SHIPPING TERMINOLOGY**

7. You placed an order with a vendor, and your shipment is two days late. You call, and the vendor tells you that the items you wanted are out of stock and that (s)he is awaiting a shipment from the manufacturer. This means your items are on \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. back order
- B. layaway
- C. will call
- D. none of the above

8. To see a list of all the contents of a shipment, you would check the \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. purchase order
  - B. letter of intent
  - C. manifest
  - D. none of the above

### **MATHEMATICS**

9. Caluclate:  $1/4 + 2/3 + 7/12 - 3/8 =$  \_\_\_\_\_.
- A.  $9/12$
  - B.  $3/16$
  - C.  $1\ 1/8$
  - D.  $1\ 1/12$
10. Calculate  $534 + 63 - (12*11)$  \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. 339
  - B. 465
  - C. 475
  - D. 597

### **DECISION MAKING**

Read the following procedures. Then, indicate your response to each item by filling in the corresponding circle on your answer sheet. Base your response only on the rules provided, not on your own experience.

#### ***Departmental Ordering Procedures***

The following guidelines should be followed when ordering supplies:

1. Purchase order forms must be completed for all requested supplies.
2. Each order form should indicate the item number, the quantity of items needed, and the listed price per item.
3. The order form must then be approved and signed by the Division Supervisor in order to be processed. The Division Secretary may approve and sign the order form only when the Supervisor is unavailable due to approved leave.

11. Pat Smith, the State operator, needs memo pads to record numbers and messages. She e-mailed the General Services Supervisor, Taylor James, requesting memo pads. Her e-mail contained the quantity of items needed and the listed price per item. Ms. James forwarded the e-mail to request the pads. Ms. James' action \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. complies with guideline 1
  - B. complies with guideline 2
  - C. complies with guideline 3
  - D. none of the above
12. The building manager requested that Lara Campbell, the division supervisor's secretary, order paper towels for the building lavatories. General Services Supervisor, James Taylor, was out-of-town on approved annual leave. Ms. Campbell completed and submitted an order form with the item number, the quantity of items needed, and the total purchase amount. Ms. Campbell's action \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. violates guideline 1
  - B. violates guideline 2
  - C. violates guideline 3
  - D. none of the above

### **COMPARING DETAILS**

13. In the chart below, the set of product numbers that match is \_\_\_\_\_.

	<i><b>PRODUCT NUMBER ON PURCHASE ORDER</b></i>	<i><b>PRODUCT NUMBER IN SUPPLY CATALOG</b></i>
<b>1</b>	2569	2568
<b>2</b>	7354	7345
<b>3</b>	1245	1245

- A. 1
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. none of the above

Select the answer which exactly matches the underlined item. (Do not consider differences in spacing).

14.                    Schneider    11/16/75        581932

- A.     Schneider    11/16/75        518932
- B.     Schneider    11/16/75        581932
- C.     Schnieder    11/16/75        581932
- D.     Shnieder       11/16/75        518932

## **PRIORITIZING**

### **SCENARIO**

Today is Monday and it is now 8:00 a.m. and you have just arrived at work. You are in the office alone today. There is no one available to assist you today. Your work day ends at 12:00 p.m.

There are several items in your in-box when you arrive in your office. Other events occur as noted.

1	A note the secretary left in your box stating that you have a mandatory Finance meeting from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Jones Building on State Street.
2	The Services Supervisor has submitted a request for a new copier and would like the specifications on contract copiers. He needs to review this before ordering next month.
3	The phone rings at 8:30 a.m. The Commissioner needs to meet with you about the supply budget. He wants to meet now and expects you to bring all supply reports with you.
4	There are also fifteen purchase orders to review for completeness. These orders need to be made by the end of the week.

15. Which of the following situations would you handle **FIRST**?

- A. 1
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4

16. Which of the following situations would you handle **LAST**?

- A. 1
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4

### **ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE IN WRITING**

Each of the following sentences is preceded by the identifying letters A, B, C, or D. The sentences are arranged so that the proper sequence of events has been scrambled. The questions following the sentences deal with when each event occurred during the complaint investigation.

- A. He called the main facility to request more supplies to be delivered to the sampling site.
  - B. In his request, he provided the specific types and amounts of supplies needed by the sampling team.
  - C. The clerk at the facility stated that the shipment would be there tomorrow.
  - D. Chris needed additional supplies to setup the sampling event.
- 

17. What happened first?

18. What happened second?

19. Which of the following sentences represents STANDARD English grammar?

- A. Can you attend the utility meeting on Thursday, May 5, 2011.
- B. Can you attend the utility meeting, on Thursday May 5, 2011?
- C. Can you attend the utility meeting on Thursday, May 5 2011?
- D. Can you attend the utility meeting on Thursday, May 5, 2011?

20. Which of the following words is spelled correctly?

- A. comittee
- B. committe
- C. commitee
- D. none of the above

## **ANSWER KEY**

### **BASIC ACCOUNTING CONCEPTS**

1. A
2. D

### **ENGLISH & METRIC UNIT WEIGHT & MEASUREMENTS**

3. B
4. B

### **FILING SYSTEMS**

5. C
6. A

### **PURCHASING & SHIPPING TERMINOLOGY**

7. A
8. C

### **MATHEMATICS**

9. C
10. B

### **DECISION MAKING**

11. D
12. B

### **COMPARING DETAILS**

13. C
14. B

### **PRIORITIZING**

15. C
16. B

**ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE IN WRITING**

- 17. D
- 18. A
- 19. D
- 20. D

**REMEMBER!!!**

**Be sure to bring your NOTIFICATION CARD and a form of PICTURE IDENTIFICATION when you come to the exam, as you will not be allowed into the testing location without them.**